

forces so productive of profit to those interested in their operation. Since Calvin's indulgence to interest, critics of the traditional doctrine could argue that religion itself spoke with an uncertain voice.

Such developments inevitably affected the tone in which the discussion of economic ethics was carried on by the divines, and even before the end of the sixteenth century, though they did not dream of abandoning the denunciation of unconscionable bargains, they were surrounding it with qualifications. The *Decades* of Bullinger, of which three English translations were made in the ten years following his death, and which Convocation in 1586 required to be obtained and studied by all the inferior clergy, indicated a *via media*.

As uncompromising as any mediaeval writer in his hatred of the sin of covetousness, he denounces with all the old fervour oppressive contracts which grind the poor. But he is less intolerant of economic motives than most of his predecessors, and concedes, with Calvin, that, before interest is condemned as usury, it is necessary to consider both the terms of the loan and the position of borrower and lender.

The stricter school of religious opinion continued to cling to the traditional theory down to the Civil War. Conservative divines took advantage of the section in the Act of 1571 declaring that "

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 being forbydden by the law\$ _x>f God is
 synne and
 detestable," to argue that the Statute had
 in reality
 altered nothing, and that the State left it to
 the Church
 to prevent bargains which, for reasons of
 practical
 expediency, it did not think fit to prohibit,
 but which
 it did not encourage and declined to
 enforce. It is
 in obedience to such doctrines that a
 scrupulous parson
 refuses a cure, until he is assured that the
 money which
 will be paid to him _comes^ jfrpm the jrent of
 land, not
 from interest "on^capiteP¹ But~evSa"rso^"
 tfrere are
 difficulties. The parson of Kingham
 bequeaths a cow
 to the poor of Burford, which is " set to
 hire for a